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CHRIS YOST

Taking time out of his busy schedule as a regular scribe on a host of Marvel Comics titles, Chris Yost sat down Marvel Animation Age to chat about the fan-beloved *The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes* and what he has in store for 2012. Yost served as story editor for the entire first season and a portion of the second season of *The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes*, which currently airs on Disney XD, while also working on assorted comic book projects. Yost's next big comic project is *Scarlet Spider*, launching from Marvel Comics.

Marvel Animation Age: *The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes* wrapped up its first season with arguably the most intense episodes of the bunch. Can you tell us about building to the season finale, and how you coordinated the entire season to make sure the pay-off was epic?

Christ Yost: The first 13 episodes were all about bringing the whole team together. We started with the original five - Iron Man, Thor, Hulk, Ant-Man and Wasp - and then expanded with Captain America, Black Panther, and finally Hawkeye. One of the great things about the comics was that the team was always changing. Members left, new members joined... we wanted to capture that feeling.

The second half of the season, now that the full team was assembled, was throwing the biggest of the bad guys at them. Everything they faced in the first half was just a taste, we hinted at and bult up the classic Avengers villains like the Masters of Evil, Kang, Ultron and Loki... and then unleashed them all. We wanted to show the audience how the Avengers earned the name 'Earth's Mightiest Heroes.' They earn it by going up against the biggest villains.

MAA: The fan response to the first season was tremendous, especially with the cliffhanger finale. Was there any worry about making sure you met fan expectations while staying true with what you wanted to do for the first season?

CY: Generally in animation, it's so long since the episode is completed until you get any kind of fan reaction, it's too late to change course. If fans didn't respond, there wouldn't be much we could do until season two. So we go with our gut. If we liked it, we had to have faith that fans would respond... because in large part, *we* are fans. We set out to make the best, truest Avengers cartoon we could. If we stayed true to the characters, we knew we'd have something fans would respect.

All that being said, we've been very pleased with the fans' response. [smiles]

MAA: With the first season completely aired, and also available on DVD and for download, are there any specific memories - either in the episodes or behind the scenes - that stick out for you?

CY: I remember getting in the rough cut of the second part of the Ultron two-parter, and as I'm watching it - with no music or sound effects, mind you - i'm on the edge of my seat, it's so intense. My wife laughed at me... i knew what was going to happen, and still!

Every step of the way is the best memory. Seeing the character designs, plotting out the series arc, being with the actors in the studio as they brought it all to life, hearing the music... it's an amazing experience all made by the people that worked so hard - Josh Fine, Ciro Nieli, Frank Paur, Tom Perkins, our entire voice cast - the amount of passion for this project was overwhelming.

MAA: And now we move on to the second season of *The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes*. The second season is set to debut in 2012 on Disney XD. What can fans expect to see as the season season gears up? Will the show pick up right off from the cliffhanger finale?

CY: We pick up a few weeks after the season one finale with a little episode called "The Private War of Doctor Doom." This season really expands the Avengers' world, with guest stars from all across the Marvel Universe. Heroes like the Fantastic Four and Guardians of the Galaxy show up, as do new villains.

The second season is our 'cosmic' season as well, and you'll be seeing the Avengers dealing with interstellar threats like the Kree Empire and the shape-shifting Skrulls.

MAA: You worked on the first half of season two before the show was handed over to Man of Action, is that correct? What type of initiatives or changes will fans notice when the new creative takes over for the second half of the season? How far along were you involved in the show's second season production before leaving?

CY: I more or less transitioned off the show at the mid-season point with episode 39, but worked on a few more episodes along with Jeph Loeb, including the final episodes of the season.

Man of Action did a run of episodes in the back half of season two, five or six of them I believe, and they're everything you'd expect from Man of Action. If we've done our job right, you won't notice any changes at all!

MAA: Out of what you've seen and worked on, can you tease and surprises for the second season of *The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes*?

CY: No spoilers!! But believe it or not, the second season is even bigger, more epic than the first. The threats the Avengers are dealing with only get deadlier, and the Avengers are going to show the whole universe why they're Earth's Mightiest Heroes. Plus, I got to realize a career-long goal in the second season, which made me extremely happy.

MAA: In addition to your work on *The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes*, you also have a major project starting in 2012. In fact, you basically kick off the new year with for Marvel with *Scarlet Spider* - your new comic title. So, why should we be excited about this?

CY: The tagline pretty much sums it up... "All of the Power, None of the Responsibility." All those things you'd do if you had Spider-Man's powers and none of the good upbringing that Peter Parker had? Scarlet Spider's doing it.

Kaine is a clone of Peter Parker, the Amazing Spider-Man. But without the guidance of Aunt May and Uncle Ben, without the life and love that Peter had, he didn't turn out so good. Any to top that off, from the day he was 'born,' Kaine has been dying from cellular degeneration. He was physically deformed, a little crazy, and made both Spider-Man and the original Scarlet Spider's life hell. But after the events of "Spider-Island," Kaine's been cured. He's been given a second chance at life. And this is the story of his redemption.

MAA: How much background do readers need to know for *Scarlet Spider*? Is this an easy book for viewers of *The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes* to jump on to?

CY: The first issue is very new reader friendly. It's the start of Kaine's brand new life, and any backstory or history we'll give it to you here. It's an easy book for anyone to jump on to, but it skews a little more adult than *The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes* does.

MAA: Can you drop a few teasers on what we can expect in the first year of *Scarlet Spider*? Is it safe to say...expect the unexpected?

CY: Absolutely. In the first year, you're going to see Kaine up against brand new villains like the Salamander, old X-Men foes like The Assassins Guild, everyone's favorite corporation Roxxon, and a certain Hunter from Spider-Man's own rogues gallery.

MAA: To wrap things up, what can we expect from your in the coming year? We got *The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes*, *Scarlet Spider*...where else should keep an eye out for your works?

CY: There's a mini-series in progress right now called *Battle Scars* that introduces a brand new character named Marcus Johnson to the Marvel Universe. He's just become the most wanted man in the Marvel Universe, with Captain America, SHIELD, Taskmaster, the Serpent Society and even Deadpool hot on his trail. And this year you're going to find out why, and just who Marcus Johnson is.

Marvel Animation Age would like to thank Chris Yost for his participation in this Q & A!

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